

Minority Views and Estimates of the Democratic Caucus of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology on the FY 2016 Budget Request for Submission to the Budget Committee

February 20, 2015

The President's budget request represents a significant step forward for investments in our country's future. Sequestration had crippled our ability to make needed investments so that we could keep pace with the innovation and education commitments being made by our economic competitors. With this budget the President has left sequestration behind, proposing responsible increases in programs that insure we remain globally competitive--creating good, skilled jobs now and in the future.

While we may differ on some of the specific allocations in the President's budget request, we strongly support his commitment to investing in our future and expect that the Congress will at least support the overall level of civilian R&D funding contained in the President's budget request. Specifically, the President's budget request provides funding for key research and development agencies in our jurisdiction, with FY 16 requests as follows: NSF at \$7.724 billion (5.2 % increase over FY15); NIST at \$1.12 billion (29.6 % increase); NASA at \$18.53 billion (2.9 % increase); NOAA at \$6 billion (9.8 % increase), as well as funding for DOE's Office of Science, EERE, and ARPA-E accounts, EPA's Science and Technology account, Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology account, and FAA's R&D account.

We also welcome the Majority's recognition that such investments need to be made, and their seeming commitment to increasing funding for Federal R&D. We expect the Majority to honor that commitment as our Committee and the Congress as a whole consider authorizing and appropriations legislation for agencies under our jurisdiction in the coming months.

As we have said in Democratic submissions to the Budget Committee in recent years, the choice facing our nation is a critical one. Either we make the investments in R&D and innovation that will lead to job creation and improved quality of life now and in the future—or we go down the path of arbitrary and short-sighted cuts to America's science and technology enterprise and the STEM

education activities that support it. That latter path will inevitably lead to a future for America that will disadvantage our children and grandchildren.

This Minority Views and Estimates should make clear that we choose to invest. As we have said before, the nation's R&D agencies have returned significant economic and societal benefits to the American people over the years. The historical record is clear and compelling. We have no doubt that future investments will *continue* to deliver significant benefits if we have the foresight to maintain our commitment to fostering R&D and STEM education.

We will not attempt to use these Minority Views and Estimates to make a point-by-point critique of the Majority's Views and Estimates. There are some specific elements of the Majority's Views and Estimates that may merit consideration when we turn to authorizing the various programs in our Committee's jurisdiction. However, it is clear that the overall negative message and mischaracterizations, misguided policy prescriptions, and failure to invest adequately in key parts of our research and development enterprise make the Majority's Views and Estimates something that we cannot support.

As the Budget Committee works to craft its Budget Resolution, we urge its Members to at least maintain the level of federal investment in R&D and STEM education contained in the President's budget request and hopefully do even better than that, whether in basic research, energy technology innovation, aeronautics and space exploration, manufacturing, climate science, or any of the other important elements of our nation's R&D and innovation enterprise. Retiring the National debt represents a generation of activity that is best done built on a vibrant and innovative economy. That sort of growth can only come from proper investment and innovation. If we fail to invest adequately due to a misguided goal of attempting to cut a few more dollars from the deficit over the short-term, we will wind up hurting our future economy, job creation, and quality of life. We know that the country deserves better and that this Congress can do better.